

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release
February 3, 2005

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Four Illinois Leaders of Hell's Angels Motorcycle Club Charged with Racketeering and Drug Conspiracy

Peoria, IL - The United States Attorney for the Central District of Illinois, Jan Paul Miller, today announced the arrest and indictment of four leaders of Illinois' Hell's Angels organization. Joining U.S. Attorney Miller were representatives of the law enforcement agencies participating in the ongoing Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) investigating the case: Andrew Traver, Special Agent in Charge, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Chicago Division; Timothy J. Ogden, Associate Special Agent in Charge, Drug Enforcement Administration, Chicago Field Division; Christopher R. Pikelis, Special Agent in Charge, Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation Division, Chicago Field Office; and, Lieutenant Jeff Patterson, Zone Two Investigations, Illinois State Police. The case prosecution is being coordinated by Assistant U.S. Attorney Tate Chambers of the Peoria division of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Central District of Illinois.

The indictment, returned in December 2004 by a federal grand jury in Peoria, charges: **Melvin J. Chancey**, age 35, of Alsip, Illinois; **James L. White**, age 50, of Belvidere, Illinois; **David G. Ohlendorf**, age 39, of New Lenox, Illinois; and, **Richard A. Abrams**, age 39, of Rockford, Illinois with racketeering (RICO); RICO conspiracy; and narcotics distribution conspiracy. The indictment also seeks the criminal forfeiture of approximately \$816,000 which constitutes proceeds allegedly derived from the RICO offense, and approximately \$624,000 which constitutes proceeds allegedly derived from the narcotics distribution conspiracy.

The indictment alleges that from 1994 to the present, the four men were members and associates of the Chicago, Rockford, and Illinois Nomad (Spring Valley) chapters of the Hell's Angels organization. The men allegedly participated in the operation and management of the Hell's Angels' criminal enterprise using a pattern of violent and intimidating activity to protect and expand the enterprise's criminal operations and to instill fear and intimidation in others. This pattern of violent activity allegedly included attempted murder, robbery, intimidation, extortion, attempted arson, narcotics distribution and conspiracy to do the same.

U.S. Attorney Miller said, "I commend the law enforcement agencies involved in this lengthy and wide-reaching investigation. This indictment represents a significant investment of each agency's time and resources and an ongoing commitment to work together to ensure that such acts of violence and drug-dealing as charged in the indictment will not be tolerated."

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Some examples of specific acts of racketeering activity alleged and described in the indictment are:

- ▶ On or about June 25, 1994, in Cook County, Illinois, Chancey and Ohlendorf allegedly shot another motorcycle club's chapter president in the right chest and leg while he was riding a motorcycle on an expressway;
- ▶ In or about March 1995, Chancey and others allegedly traveled to Kankakee, Illinois, with firearms and pipe bombs to locate and kill members of another motorcycle club and bomb their clubhouse;
- ▶ In or about early 1997, in Cook County, Chancey allegedly told employees of the Skybox Lounge that unless Hells Angels members were permitted to enter the lounge without paying a cover charge, they would bomb the lounge and customers' cars and kill the employees and everyone else in the lounge;
- ▶ In or about the spring and summer of 2002, Ohlendorf allegedly directed others to arm themselves and travel to Peoria, Illinois, to kill members of another motorcycle club; and in fact, others did allegedly travel to Peoria with firearms and ammunition to carry out the plan; and,
- ▶ In or about August 2002, in Peoria and LaSalle Counties, Ohlendorf, White and Abrams allegedly planned and directed others to carry out plans to locate and murder members of another motorcycle club at the Route 66 Speedway.

Further, the indictment alleges that from about 1993 to 2002, the four defendants conspired to distribute more than 20 kilograms each of cocaine and methamphetamine.

The indictment alleges that each of the defendants either holds or has held a leadership position in an Illinois chapter of the organization. According to the indictment, Chancey became a member of the Hells Angels' Chicago chapter in about 1994, and served as chapter president from 1997 to 1999; White, a member of the Rockford chapter since 1994, served as chapter treasurer in 1997, and as president of the Rockford chapter from 1998 until the present; Ohlendorf, a Chicago chapter member from 1994 through 2001, became a member of the Illinois Nomad (Spring Valley) chapter in 2002, and has served as its president since 2002; and, Abrams, a member of the Rockford chapter from 1994 to 2001, held the position of chapter vice-president from 1997 through 2001, then joined the Illinois Nomad chapter, serving as its chapter secretary and treasurer since 2001.

The defendants made their initial appearance yesterday, February 2, 2005, in Peoria before U.S. Magistrate Judge John A. Gorman. Judge Gorman ordered the defendants be detained pending detention hearings scheduled on February 10, 2005.

Members of the public are reminded that an indictment is merely an accusation; the defendants are presumed innocent unless proven guilty.

If convicted, the maximum statutory penalty for the offense of RICO and RICO conspiracy is up to life imprisonment, and fines up to \$250,000. For narcotics distribution conspiracy, the statutory penalty is 10 years to life imprisonment.

"The cooperative effort by ATF, DEA, IRS, and the Illinois State Police was a crucial component of this successful investigation," said Andrew Traver, Special Agent in Charge, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Chicago Division. "I commend the agents who, through years of undaunted dedication, worked to perfect this case."

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Christopher R. Pikelis, Special Agent in Charge, IRS Criminal Investigation Division, Chicago Field Office, stated that, "The IRS Criminal Investigation Division takes much pride in being the premier financial investigative agency in the world. IRS Criminal Investigation Division is proud to provide our financial expertise in this investigation and to work jointly with other law enforcement agencies to protect the communities in which we live."

Larry Trent, Director of the Illinois State Police said, "Working cooperatively with federal and local law enforcement agencies, we are able to make the most effective use of Illinois taxpayers' dollars. The Illinois State Police looks forward to continuing this and other cooperative law enforcement efforts to provide our citizens the public safety and service they deserve."

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